

**Tri-County F.I.S.H. Team
(Funding for Improved Salmonid Habitat)
Executive Committee/Public Quarterly Meeting**

**Santa Barbara
County Employee's University Center
267 Camino del Remedio, Valley Room
Santa Barbara, California, 93110**

**October 19, 2006
1:30 to 3:30 PM**

Minutes

Participants

Karen Waln, City of Ventura
Jim Kentosh, United Water Conservation District
Rick Hawley, Greenspace
Eric Wier, San Luis Obispo County Public Works
Candice Constantine, County of Santa Barbara
Dennis Harper, Matilija Fly Fishers
Rob Almy, Santa Barbara County Water Agency
Jeff Peters, Questa Engineering Corp
Russ Baggerly, Casitas Municipal Water District
Scott Lewis, Casitas Municipal Water District
Margaret Paul, California Dept of Fish & Game
Tommy Liddell, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Tim Robinson, Cachuma Conservation and Release Board
Joanne Schellhase, Ventura County Planning
Nancy Settle, Ventura County Planning
Brian Trautwein, Environmental Defense Center
Will S., Questa Engineering Corp

Item 1: Welcome & Introductions

**Item 2: BMPs/Technical Workshops – TCFT Consultant, Jeff Peters, Questa
BMPs**

Jeff Peters presented drafts of the 3 new BMPs prepared for this grant cycle: 1) Basin and Channel Repair (BCR); 2) Channel Design and Construction Guidelines (CDCG; and 3) Earthwork and Grading (EG). Jeff also provided a copy of revisions to the previously completed Livestock Grazing and Pasture Management (LG) BMP. TCFT participants were asked to review the documents and provide comments and feedback to Joanne Schellhase by November 22nd.

While reviewing the drafts, Jeff requested particular attention be paid to BCR 2.0, which suggests incorporating minor fish passage barrier removal and enhancement projects into routine repair and maintenance activities, where feasible. Another potentially controversial section is BCR 5.0 (F), which suggests incorporation of a low flow channel if not included in the original design. Jeff also mentioned the Channel Design BMP may be treading on the territory of flood control district design manuals. While flood control districts may have hydrologic manuals, this BMP was written to provide direction for a geomorphically stable design. By law, any existing county design manuals would take precedence over TCFT BMPs. Input from county watershed protection and flood control districts will be important. It was also suggested that Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in the tri-county area be included in TCFT BMP review as they frequently advise landowners. Joanne Schellhase and Jeff Peters will coordinate the review process with Ventura County Watershed Protection District and the tri-county RCD's.

Rick Hawley suggested that a discussion of invasive plants should be included in the Basin and Channel Repair BMP. Rick also suggested that since many times the source of channel debris can be easily identified, perhaps it is possible to coordinate with property owners to address the issue over the longer term. Jeff Peters indicated that this approach was not currently addressed in the BMP, but that it is the correct way to think about the problem. He mentioned it may be possible to earmark a portion of 401 certification funds for clean-up efforts.

Russ Baggerly initiated a discussion regarding the intended use of the BMPs. Joanne Schellhase commented that the BMPs originate from the 2004 TCFT Activities Assessment Report, which identified frequent activities performed by the TCFT participants. The BMPs are intended to provide guidance to TCFT participants for those activities. Jeff Peters added that the BMPs serve two purposes: 1) standardized practices for TCFT participants and 2) to aid in permit streamlining. Margaret Paul remarked that using the BMPs as part of a grant proposal essentially front loads the application and increases its competitiveness. Use of the TCFT BMPs tells DFG that you've thought about your activities, you know there are going to be impacts, and you know how you are going to deal with them. Karen Waln suggested that the BMPs are useful as in-house training for people who are actually performing the work within TCFT organizations. Margaret Paul agreed that this is an important step so that those doing this work can provide input on what they can and cannot accommodate. Dennis Harper questioned whether the TCFT BMPs are the initial starting point and that permitting agencies would then need to specify the language of the activity. Jeff indicated that this is not necessarily the case. The idea is to write the BMPs as agency approved such that they meet permit requirements. Rob Almy added that some BMPs are specific and permit ready while others are not. In his view, the BMPs represent a menu; the permit applicant selects the activities that apply to a project as part of their permit application, the agency determines how many are written adequately and which need more specific language.

Permit Streamlining

Jeff Peters handed out a brief progress report on permit streamlining. Initially a TCFT plan was set up to develop a permit streamlining program, however it was determined to be too expensive for the funding provided. As an alternative, two other permit streamlining programs were identified as potential "piggyback" opportunities: 1) RCD Permit Coordination Program and 2) DFG Regional General Permit (RGP).

Margaret Paul indicated that the DFG RGP, which applies to DFG funded projects that involve fisheries restoration, does not typically include local governments though it could be considered on a case-by-case basis. Their view is that local governments already have staff available to work through the permit process. In addition, when an organization utilizes the DFG permit, DFG is responsible for project oversight as well as monitoring, sometimes up to 10 years. In addition the project is included in DFG CEQA negative declaration documentation. To cover these efforts, inclusion of local governments in the RGP would require DFG resources that are currently stretched too thin. DFG may consider inclusion of local governments in their RGP if all counties could contribute the funds necessary to hire a DFG staff person to cover monitoring and CEQA compliance for TCFT projects. Rob Almy questioned how well the DFG RGP can streamline the local government permitting process since it does not cover Regional Water Quality Control Board 401 permits, DFG 1601 streambed alteration permits, or California Coastal Commission permits. As an alternative, the TCFT may want to work towards developing their own RGP, though this would require a grant request at a cost of perhaps \$300,000 or more.

Workshops

The TCFT workshop training for Bridge/Low Water Crossing Construction and Maintenance will be held on Thursday, November 16th, 2006. To be site central, the training will be held in the Santa Barbara area, location to be determined. The workshop will be conducted by Syd Temple with Questa Engineering.

The TCFT workshop training for Livestock Grazing and Site Clearing will be held in March 2007. Joanne Schellhase will work with Tim Robinson to coordinate efforts between the TCFT and Cachuma Conservation Release Board's outreach efforts to landowners. The workshop will be conducted by ag industry experts. Joanne Schellhase reported that several potential speakers mentioned at the July 27th TCFT meeting are available and interested. These include George Work (rancher), Bob Blanchard (rancher), and Royce Larsen (UC Davis Extension/Certified Range Manager). Joanne Schellhase will continue efforts to contact someone from Vail & Vicker in Northern California. Dennis Harper will also provide additional names of potential speakers.

Item 3: Barrier Prioritizations – TCFT Consultant, Jeff Peters, Questa

Keystone barrier discussion

Will S. (Questa Engineering) presented the results of the TCFT barrier prioritization database. He mentioned that data gaps still exist though duplicates have been removed. He provided a handout with tables and maps of keystone barriers in each of the 3 counties. Several comments were made that the tables should include a measure of feasibility which would distinguish a large dam project from a smaller project.

Rick Hawley indicated that 2 of the barriers listed for San Luis Obispo County had been removed (Coon Creek #130 and Santa Rosa Creek #34) and that a grant was recently submitted for a 3rd (Santa Rosa Creek #36). Additional barriers will be added to the San Luis Obispo list for further discussion and selection. Jim Kentosh mentioned that a fish ladder on Santa Paula creek in Ventura County was recently washed out and that this barrier should be added. Russ Baggerly mentioned inclusion of Thatcher Creek in Ventura County. Russ also suggested site

selection should consider the NOAA Steelhead Recovery Plan, though the final report is not yet completed. In addition, he mentioned CalFish (www.calfish.org) should be consulted for effective design of fish passage projects.

Joanne Schellhase reviewed the TCFT 2006-2007 Work Plan with funding available to develop conceptual plans and grant proposals for 4-12 top priority barrier sites. The final number will be determined by the level of detail desired in the conceptual plans. Several comments were made that considerations in site selection not only include identifying a good site, but also landowner willingness and identifying a funding sponsor. Margaret Paul agreed that willing landowners should be a key component in barrier selection. She also suggested that in addition to considering the lowest barrier, identifying barriers upstream from projects that have already been completed, building on past work, also makes the grant more competitive. Karen Waln suggested gaining DFG input on site selection to increase likelihood of grant funding.

Joanne Schellhase will circulate a list of top priority barriers from the TCFT database to the group for additions, removals, and comments. Initial selection of sites will be determined by the TCFT Executive Committee via email and conference call. Notice of site selections will be distributed for public comment prior to finalization.

Grant proposal deadline calendar

Joanne Schellhase mentioned that a draft Grant Proposal Deadline Calendar had been provided to the TCFT Executive Committee for review. Comments and additional grant opportunities should be provided as soon as possible. A final version will be posted to the TCFT website on November 1st.

Item 4: Public Outreach – TCFT Coordinator, Joanne Schellhase

Joanne Schellhase discussed a need to select point persons in each county to determine site locations for TCFT fishing signs and landowner brochure outreach. The following TCFT participants volunteered to spearhead these efforts:

San Luis Obispo County: Rick Hawley/Eric Wier

Santa Barbara County: Lew Riffle/Tim Robinson

Ventura County: Dennis Harper

Joanne suggested two approaches to site selection: 1) coordinate with TCFT priority sites selected for development of conceptual plans and grant proposal preparation, or 2) target creeks where current restoration efforts are occurring and high volume public areas (parks). The Executive Committee will be polled via email to determine preference for these 2 options.

Joanne Schellhase distributed potential fishing sign designs. Several people liked the inclusion of a phone number to call for violations, as well as a multi-lingual (Spanish) component. The TCFT funding available provides for either a full color 1.5 x 2 ft sign, or a 2 x 3 ft two color sign. The Executive Committee will be polled via email to determine preference for these 2 options. A draft design will be distributed for public comment prior to finalization.

Joanne Schellhase briefed the group on the challenges of printing and distributing to 500 landowners the Santa Barbara Creek Care Guide and City of San Luis Obispo Creek Care brochure, as specified in the TCFT grant, within the allotted budget. As an alternative, with DFG approval, TCFT could develop, print, and distribute a new 4 panel brochure to 1,000 landowners across the 3 counties. The Executive Committee will be polled via email to approve a request to change the grant specification.

Item 5: TCFT Website – TCFT Coordinator, Joanne Schellhase

Tommy Liddell presented a draft of the TCFT website layout and navigation redesign. Russ Baggerly suggested adding a site map and links to relevant websites (CalFish, DFG PAD, NOAA, etc...). To view a live version of the draft, go to the following location: <http://www.tcft.org/reorg/Index.html>. It is important to either click the link, or copy and paste it into your browser since there are no links to it on the active TCFT site. Comments on the draft should be provided to Joanne Schellhase. Joanne also asked the group to email her any upcoming events that they would like to see posted to the TCFT website.

Item 6: TCFT Organizational Issues – TCFT Coordinator, Joanne Schellhase

To be discussed at January meeting.

Item 7: Participant Updates (Provided Via Email)

Nancy Settle – The Watershed Coalition of Ventura County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan includes a program for future funding to restore fish habitat. This would make it eligible for the next round of IRWMP grant funds this next year. Their project list includes coordination with the Tri-County F.I.S.H. team.

Lew Riffle – The CCC is currently implementing a project at the Thorne Ranch in Buellton. They had to enlist the help of Trout Unlimited to "officialize" the grant intent and are using volunteers as well as CCC personnel. They have done the hardscape work to stabilize the bank with rocks and wattle cabled together. They plan to plant willow cuttings later in the season after some rain wets the soil up.

Brian Trautwein – Brian circulated a handout regarding the EDC's efforts and progress on the Mission Creek/Caltrans project. Plans have been developed to create a boulder channel in the shadier half of a mile-long section of the concrete channel. The project is expected to cost between \$5 - \$10 million. The project is awaiting final approval and funding. The City of Santa Barbara has become a leading group in the effort.

Item 8: Wrap Up

The next meeting will be held in Ventura County; Thursday, January 18th, 2007; 1:30-3:30.